

[< Back](#) | [Print](#) 

Green Cleaning Recipes

Help the planet and get a squeaky-clean home with these easy (and inexpensive) formulas for eco-friendly cleaning.

Do-It-Yourself Cleaners

The Basic Ingredients

Baking Soda

This works best on proteins, grease, and animal messes. Because it's slightly abrasive, it can be used for scouring -- and, of course, it's a natural deodorizer.



Distilled White Vinegar

This mild acid works on alkaline substances, dissolving scale, inhibiting mold, and cutting soap scum. It's terrific for stains such as coffee, rust, and tea.



Simple Soap

Try castile soap, made with [olive oil](#), or a vegetable-based soap. Both attach to soil at the molecular level, so you can rinse dirt away with water.



The Recipes (from top to bottom)

Soft Scrub

Add enough soap to 1/8 cup baking soda to make a creamy mixture. Apply with sponge to clean; rinse the surface well. Use and discard.



Appliance Cleaner

Dry baking soda shines up small appliances and even removes bread wrappers burned onto the toaster. Try rubbing a teaspoon onto your grubby blender or food processor with a clean flannel cloth.

Toilet Cleaner/Deodorizer

Sprinkle toilet bowl with 1/4 cup baking soda. Drizzle with 1/4 cup vinegar, then scour with a toilet brush.

Oven Cleaner

Sprinkle oven with 1/2 cup baking soda (more if needed) and spray with water. Let sit for several hours or overnight before scraping up stains and spills. Rinse thoroughly with water.

Hardwood Floor Cleaner

In a pail or bucket, mix 1/4 cup distilled white vinegar in one gallon warm water. Mop wood or linoleum floors, then rinse with water, making sure not to leave large pools to dry.

Commercial Green Cleaners

Polish Wood

Choose a vegetable-based soap to polish [wood floors](#) and furniture to a glow. Murphy's Oil Soap, 32 fl. oz., about \$5; most grocery stores.

Wash Dishes

Choose detergents free of chlorine, phosphates, and synthetic chemicals. Ecover Automatic Dishwasher Powder, 48 oz., \$5.55; shopnatural.com. Mrs. Meyer's Clean Day Dish Soap, 16 oz., \$4.99; mrsmeyers.com.

Clean Surfaces

An all-purpose, plant-based cleaner removes grime from almost everywhere -- walls, windows, [countertops](#), and appliances. Shaklee Basic H2 Organic Super Cleaning Concentrate, 64 oz., \$42.97; shaklee.com.

Scour Grime

Biodegradable scouring powder with mineral abrasives cleans countertops, grout, outdoor furniture, grills, microwave ovens, showers, sinks, and stoves. Bon Ami, 14 oz., about \$1.50; most grocery stores.

Whiten Surfaces

A nonchlorine oxygen bleach cleanser tackles stains on grout, sinks, bath tubs, and toilets. Jason Heather's Oxygen Bleach Cleanser, 14 oz., \$2.39; vitacost.com.

About Our Green Cleaning Expert

Linda Mason Hunter is a publishing professional specializing in home ecology, residential design, and the art of living in the 21st century. She is also the co-author of *Green Clean*. Visit her Web site at www.hunterink.com.

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